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***Nebraska Bird Review* (December 2015) 83(4), WHOLE ISSUE**

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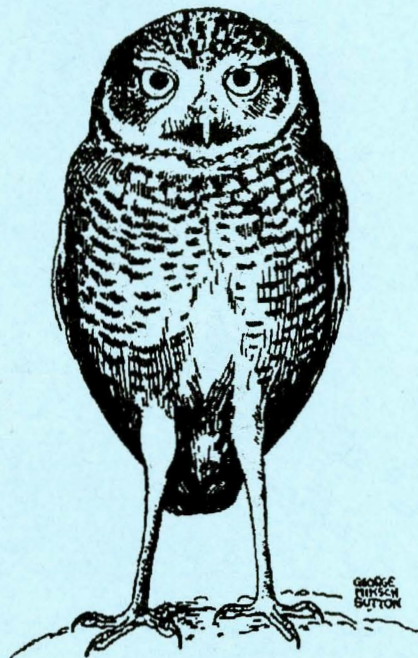
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The Nebraska Bird Review

A Magazine of Ornithology of the
Nebraska Region

Volume 83 December 2015 Number 4



Published by the
Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc.
Founded 1899

Janis M. Paseka, Editor
Joseph Gubanyi, Ph. D., Technical Editor

SSSN 0028-1816

FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2015

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INTRODUCTION

To start, a house-keeping item: in the species accounts below, whenever I use the term "migrant" I am referring to fall migration only. Many species, of course, have differing migration strategies and timing in spring and fall.

Much of the data used in this report relating to western and Pine Ridge passerines comes from the outstanding banding efforts by Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly Rocky Mountains Bird Observatory) at Chadron State Park (CSP) and Wildcat Hills Nature Center (WHNC) in Scotts Bluff Co. This year's operators were Josh Lefever and Holly Garrod. Related to the Chadron State Park station, Andrew Pierson made this interesting observation: "I was closely involved with the CSP banding station for all of the years prior to the fires (and the first year after when it was temporarily moved down to the pond area) and it was never a very successful operation. It was always way behind the Wildcat Hills site in terms of numbers and diversity. Now, it seems there are single days when they catch a former season's worth of birds. Is this directly attributable to the fires and subsequent regeneration of new habitat type and/or quality?"

This fall and the previous two falls have been noteworthy for the large number of final sighting dates for many species that are pushing against those species' latest expected dates. This phenomenon is across the board, both in waterbirds like Blue-winged Teal, Whooping Crane, Willet, and Common Tern, as well as passerines, such as Yellow-bellied (see species account for further discussion) Flycatcher, Plumbeous Vireo, Summer Tanager, at least 5 species of sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Lazuli and Indigo Buntings. Conversely, a few winter visitors showed up early, such as "Oregon" and "Pink-sided" Juncos.

Surprisingly large numbers of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Philadelphia Vireos appeared, as in previous fall seasons, but unexpected were influxes of Palm Warblers, usually rare in fall, and Black-throated Green Warblers.

Each season has its share of noteworthy happenings; this fall, check out the accounts for Osprey, which bred successfully for the first time in Nebraska, Black Rail, a mystery to hopefully be solved next June, a northeasterly nesting of Barn Owl, double-brooded American Kestrel, a tally of 266 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds passing through a Lincoln yard, and two very tardy Baltimore Orioles in Omaha.

Rarities this fall were few, but headed by 4th state records of both Black-headed Gull and Black-chinned Hummingbird, the latter, oddly, in far eastern Nebraska. Reports of Cave Swallow and the western subspecies of Nashville Warbler caused struggles with identification criteria, and the presence in the state of the western form of Orange-crowned Warbler was confirmed by the Pine Ridge banding stations mentioned earlier.

An update to my note in last year's Fall Seasonal Report: at that time I mentioned that 18% of the reports I used came from eBird-only contributors. A re-check for this report shows that figure now to be 52%, obviously a significant increase in only one year. I do believe that at some point eBird will largely supersede state and local on-line groups like NEBirds as the repository and source for Nebraska records as long as the trend of increasing use of eBird continues. However, I believe there still is a need for analysis and comment on the data available, which is probably best done through a Seasonal Report such as this.

Finally, some of you may be wondering what my guideline is for including any given species in these accounts, as some do appear some seasons but not in others. I include ALL species that are regular in occurrence for the season at hand; no Northern Shrikes in the Summer Report, for example. I include these regular species whether reported (eBird, NEBIRDS, or personally) or not, as the absence of a regular species is noteworthy. I also include any casual or accidental species that are reported. I believe it is not noteworthy if an unexpected species does not show, so not all casual/accidental species are included in any given season. Thus a casual species such as Gyrfalcon may be reported in one Winter Report but not the next.

ABBREVIATIONS

ad: adult
BOL: Branched Oak L, Lancaster Co
CBL: Capitol Beach L, Lincoln
Cem: Cemetery
Co(s): County(ies)
CLNWR: Crescent Lake NWR, Garden Co
CRP: Conservation Reserve Program
CSP: Chadron SP, Dawes Co
EAC: East Ash Creek Canyon, Dawes Co
fem: female
FF: Fontenelle Forest, Sarpy Co
HCR: Harlan Co Res SRA, Harlan Co
ICSP: Indian Cave State Park, Richardson/Nemaha Cos
imm: immature
juv: juvenile
L: Lake
LM: L McConaughy, Keith Co
LNB: Lakes North and Babcock, Platte Co
LO: L Ogallala (includes contiguous Keystone L), Keith Co
LSFM: Little Salt Fork Marsh, Lincoln
LSWNP: Lincoln Saline Wetlands Nature Park, Lincoln
m. ob.: many observers
NC: Nature Center
NGPC: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln
NM: National Monument
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge

NOU: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union
PL: Pawnee L, Lancaster Co
Res: Reservoir
PRSP: Platte River SP, Cass Co
RC: Records Committee
RWB: Rainwater Basin, including parts of Phelps, Hamilton, York, Clay, Fillmore,
and Thayer Cos
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, Lancaster Co
SHP: State Historical Park
SL: Sewage Lagoon(s)
SP: State Park
SRA: State Recreation Area
VNWR: Valentine NWR, Cherry Co
WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC, Scotts Bluff Co
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area
WP: Wilderness Park, Lincoln
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area

GAZETTEER

Jack Sinn: Jack Sinn Memorial WMA, Lancaster and Saunders Cos
Oliver Res: SRA, Kimball Co
Sandhills: large area of sand-based prairie in north-central and northwest Nebraska

OBSERVERS

AB: Aaron Brees, Des Moines, IA
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SSh: Scott Schmidt, Blair
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TEL: Thomas E. Labedz, Lincoln
TG: Tom Gannon, Lincoln
TJW: T.J. Walker, Brady
TJo: Tom Johnson, Cape May, NJ
TSh: Tyrone Shaw, Brady
WF: William Flack, Kearney

WM: Wayne Mollhoff, Ashland
WRa: Wallace Randall, Houston, TX
WRS: W. Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Greater White-fronted Goose: Reports were routine of this common migrant central, uncommon east, rare west.

Snow Goose: Reports were routine of this abundant migrant central and east, uncommon west.

Ross's Goose: A record fall count was the 400 amongst 100,000 Snow Geese in Fillmore Co 27 Nov (AB). One at Chappell L, Deuel Co, 10 Oct (BB) was a bit early, as was another near Holdrege 22 Oct (LE); migrants begin to appear mid-Oct.

Cackling Goose: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Canada Goose: Most summering urban flocks are not large; the 300 at a Douglas Co sod farm 29 Aug (EA) was unusual, possibly an aggregation of a few local flocks. Migrants may arrive in Sep however, and so this group may possibly have included early migrants, often detected by their smaller sizes, but no details were provided.

Mute Swan: A feral pair at Yanney L, Buffalo Co, had 4 cygnets 4 Aug (BB); they have been there for several years. At Crystal L, Blair, a family group of 5 present since Jan 2015 declined to 4 by 20 Sep (CPr), around the same time a single ad appeared on Prairie Queen Recreation Area, Sarpy Co, and remained there through 1 Nov (BP, CO).

Trumpeter Swan: The Ravenna nesting pair, present since 2011, had 3 cygnets 10 Aug (fide RH), but the pond had dried up by 7 Sep (RH). First arrivals at the Carter L, Omaha, wintering location were 18 birds in 3 groups 27 Nov (SMA). Two were at Bennington L, Douglas Co, 21 Nov (JR), and one was at BOL the next day (BS).

Tundra Swan: None were reported of this rare migrant; arrival is in late Nov.

Wood Duck: Reports were routine of this common migrant.

Gadwall: Best count was an excellent 982 in Lancaster Co 2 Nov (LE); high counts are 2030-5800.

American Wigeon: One in Saunders Co 28 Aug (LE) was early; early dates are 13-21 Aug. The count of 1500 at LO 17 Oct (EA) tied the previous second-highest count. High is 1670, at LM.

American Black Duck: None were reported of this rare eastern migrant.

Mallard: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Blue-winged Teal: There were 4 reported late migrants: one in Seward Co 22 Nov (CNK) was 8th-latest all-time. Expected late dates are 15-19 Nov; the other reports were of a fem at L Wanahoo, Saunders Co, 13 Nov (LE, details), one in Clay Co 10 Nov (WF), and 2 at CBL 8 Nov (MW).

Cinnamon Teal: Easterly was an apparent pair at BOL 11 Aug (LE); the male was in fading plumage, which makes this species much less noticeable in fall. The only other report was of 4 at Whitney L, Dawes Co, 25 Aug (ALa, JL).

- Northern Shoveler:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Northern Pintail:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Green-winged Teal:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Canvasback:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Redhead:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Ring-necked Duck:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Greater Scaup:** The only reports were of 2 at BOL 20 Nov (LE) and 2 at Olive Creek Res, Lancaster Co, 29 Nov (JGJ); these dates coincide with peak migration timing.
- Lesser Scaup:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Surf Scoter:** There were 4 reports of this rare annual fall migrant: one was at PL 29 Oct (JGJ), one at CBL 2 Nov (LE), 2 at PL 7 Nov (JGJ), and 3 at Bennington L, Douglas Co, 14 Nov (BP).
- White-winged Scoter:** There were two groups reported: 4 sub-adults in Saline Co 29 Oct (JGJ) and 3 sub-adults at L Wanahoo, Saunders Co, 7-14 Nov (JGJ, m. ob.).
- Black Scoter:** Two singles were reported, one at Alma SL 24-25 Oct (MB, G&WH) and one at CBL 30 Nov (LE).
- Long-tailed Duck:** None were reported of this rare annual fall migrant.
- Bufflehead:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Common Goldeneye:** Reports were routine of this common, locally abundant, statewide migrant.
- Barrow's Goldeneye:** The only report was of a fem with Common Goldeneyes at Olive Creek Res, Lancaster Co, 29 Nov (JGJ, video; MW, BHe). This is only the 4th eastern fall report, along with 2 in winter; there are no reports for central Nebraska away from LM, which raises a question as to whether these eastern birds are derived from the small eastern North American population rather than those in the Rockies, which presumably occur in western Nebraska.
- Hooded Merganser:** Two fem/imm birds were at PL 24 Sep (LE); such reports are rare but regular in summer and early fall and are most-likely non-breeding sub-adults.
- Common Merganser:** The 4 at LM 19 Aug (DRy) are expected there at this regular site for molt migrants, but a fem/imm was unexpected in Lincoln Co 25 Aug (TJW). There are several Aug-Sep reports, probably of non-breeding sub-adults, failed breeders, or molt migrants.
- Red-breasted Merganser:** The 40-50 at BOL 20 Nov (LE) was a good count; high counts are 44-137.
- Ruddy Duck:** The 1000 at LO 17 Oct (ERa) and 605 in Lancaster Co 30 Oct (LE) were excellent tallies; high counts are 1492-1645. This species breeds on

occasion in the southeast, mostly in the Rainwater Basin and in Lancaster Co; broods were reported in York and Seward Cos 10-16 Aug (JGJ, LE). A single fem imm was at LSM 16 Aug (BHe); Ruddy Ducks do not breed until their second summer.

Northern Bobwhite: Reports were all east of a line from Boone Co through Custer Co to Keith Co (m. ob.); best count was 20 in Buffalo Co 24 Nov (AF). Numbers are increasing in parts of Dodge Co, where 3 coveys of 12-15 birds were seen during harvest (D&JP). A rather late young bird incapable of flight was in Dodge Co 27 Oct (D&JP).

Gray Partridge: The only report was of 2 in Holt Co 20 Aug (BBo); currently this species' core range is bounded by Boyd, Holt, Antelope, Wayne, and Thurston Cos.

Ring-necked Pheasant: An excellent count was the 100+ estimated on a Cheyenne Co farm 25 Oct; most were in a Conservation Reserve Program field (BBi). Currently, highest numbers are in the southwest and southern Panhandle.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Reports were within the expected range, including reports east to Rock and Brown Cos (RSt, ERa, WF); best count was 50 in Thomas Co 7 Sep (NBe). This is a high count for fall; some CBC tallies in the past have been higher.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Best count was 150 in Lincoln Co 9 Nov (TJW); the only higher count was 179 in Boone Co on the Beaver Valley CBC in 2007.

Wild Turkey: Rather late broods of dependent young were in Seward Co 12 Sep (JG) and Lancaster Co 21 Sep (LE); both broods were about half-grown.

Red-throated Loon: There were no reports of this less-than-annual migrant.

Pacific Loon: None were reported of this rare regular fall migrant.

Common Loon: Summering birds, usually non-breeding sub-adults, are rare in the east; one at Cunningham L, Omaha, first reported 25 Jul (RMa), continued until at least 4 Aug (SMa). Another was at BOL 11-13 Aug (LE, TG).

Pied-billed Grebe: Best count was the 238 at CBL 18 Sep (LE). Large aggregations can occur in fall; high counts are 475-860.

Horned Grebe: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Red-necked Grebe: There were reports of perhaps 2 or 3 different birds. A basic-plumaged bird was at BOL 24-26 Nov (JGJ, LE, MW, BHe) and a first year bird was reported at Holmes L, Lincoln, 28-29 (LE, BP, EJ). These may have been the same bird, as described plumages are rather similar. The other report was of one rather early at LM 18 Oct (ERa); early dates are 17-19 Oct. This species is now a regular, but rare, fall migrant.

Eared Grebe: The 3rd RWB breeding report was noted in the Summer Report; it is mentioned here because of 11 nests found 7 Jul at Marsh Duck WMA, York Co, only one of which was found to be successful 9 Aug (JGJ). Last reported was rather late, a single at CBL 29 Nov (LE). Last dates are Dec 18 (twice) and 19.

Western Grebe: The high count reported at LM was 720 on 18 Oct (ERa), far lower than the usual fall buildup which reaches into the tens of thousands.

Clark's Grebe: The reports were from LM 4 Sep-18 Oct (MW, BHe, JR), and were comprised of a total of 6 birds, 5 of these 18 Oct (ERa).

Double-crested Cormorant: The nesting attempt at Harvard WPA, Clay Co, that was initiated 25 Jul had failed by Aug 26, when the 4 nests were found to have been abandoned (JGJ).

American White Pelican: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

American Bittern: One at LSWNP 24 Aug (BHe) was probably a migrant, as there were no summer reports there and migrants do first appear in late Aug. There were a further 10 reports in the period 7 Sep-5 Nov (m. ob.) for this often-tardy fall migrant.

Least Bittern: The only reports of this rare migrant were of singles at Jack Sinn 29 Aug (EA), and LSWNP 23 Aug (JSS).

Great Blue Heron: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Great Egret: This species (and other "white egrets") were slow to arrive in late summer (JGJ); only 10 were reported through 16 Aug (KD, SQ, JGJ), including 2 in Scotts Bluff Co 8 Aug KD, where rare. Perhaps they arrived late; 56 were in a tree at Walnut Creek L, Sarpy Co, 7 Oct (MBe). One at BOL 10 Nov (LE) was tardy; last dates are 19-21 Nov.

Snowy Egret: There were 4 reports, for a total of 6 birds, 3 Aug-7 Oct (JGJ, RSa, BP) all in the east.

Little Blue Heron: The only report was of one at DeSoto NWR, Washington Co, 13 Sep (HSw). This species has been rarely reported in recent years.

Cattle Egret: This species also was scarce in Aug, with only one such report, a single with ibises in Sheridan Co 5 Aug (TG). However, like Great Egret, impressive numbers showed up later: 90 were at Nathan's L, Washington Co, 7 Oct (SGu) and 24 were in Thomas Co 23 Sep (JGJ). These numbers pale, however, compared to the high fall counts: 450-591.

Green Heron: Reports were routine of this uncommon migrant in the southeastern two-thirds of the state.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: About the 8th-latest on record was one at BOL 23 Nov, described as "definitely a night-heron" (EJ). This species has lingered into Jan on two occasions.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: There were two reports of this rare summer visitor, both of juveniles at Harvard WPA, Clay Co, (JGJ): one on 16 Aug and 3 on 26 Aug.

Glossy Ibis: The only report after the several in summer was of an ad and a possible juv at Trumbull Basin, Clay Co, 16 Aug (JGJ). These birds may have been part of the group that successfully bred at nearby Harvard WPA, Clay Co.

White-faced Ibis: The first successful nesting of this species in the RWB was described in the Summer Report; the colony at Harvard WPA, Clay Co, had 50 juvs and that at Kirkpatrick North WMA, York Co, had 10 as of 10 Aug (JGJ).

Turkey Vulture: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Osprey: The successful breeding event by 2 pairs in and around Scottsbluff ended well; the first young bird (of 3) left the Western Sugar Factory nest 8 Aug, and by 11 Aug all were out of the nest (KD) but remained in the vicinity until at least 13 Aug (RSt). The Riverside nest west of Scottsbluff still had 3 young present, one out of the nest 10 Aug (KD). A 1904 paper by Bruner, Walcott and Swenk cites a successful nesting prior to 1904, without details. This is the

first time since that pre-1904 record that Ospreys have bred successfully in Nebraska.

Mississippi Kite: There were the usual reports from this species' Nebraska stronghold, Ogallala, where up to 4 were reported (m. ob), and a welcome report from North Platte of 3 birds at Centennial Park 26-27 Aug (JC, SSc). Breeding has occurred at North Platte since 2012, with spotty success. After the breeding season, Mississippi Kites disperse in all directions, and so several have been reported over the years statewide around 1 Sep. This year, one was in Holt Co 30 Aug (ERo, DLU). Unexpected was one over Lincoln, Lancaster Co, 16 Aug (JG), likely an early fall disperser, as summering birds have not been reported from Lincoln.

Bald Eagle: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant and uncommon statewide breeder.

Northern Harrier: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide migrant.

Cooper's Hawk: Reports were routine of this fairly common, locally common, statewide migrant and breeder.

Northern Goshawk: None were reported of this rare fall visitor.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Of interest was one in Thurston Co 5 Aug (SSh); there are 2 previous breeding season reports from that county, but no proven breeding. A pair soaring over Omaha 2 Aug (GD, details) was likely based at FF.

Broad-winged Hawk: The only westerly report was of one near the CSP banding station 24 Sep (JL). Recent years have seen an increase in Panhandle sightings; of 18 reports, 12 are since 2000.

Swainson's Hawk: Easterly breeding season reports are rare and usually of single birds that are likely non-breeding sub-adults; singles were in Wayne Co 13 Aug (CNK) and Clay Co 16 Aug (JGJ). This species often forms huge migrating kettles in fall; one such, in Phelps Co 30 Sep, contained as many as 550 birds (AF). There are several reports over the years of fall kettles of over 1000 birds.

Red-tailed Hawk: A "Harlan's Hawk" in Washington Co 27 Sep (RMO) was early, although there is a Nebraska specimen 30 Sep. Single birds arrived at more typical dates in Saunders Co 17 Oct (CNK) and Lancaster Co 20 Oct (EB, NR). Urban pairs of Red-tailed Hawks are popular with downtown visitors; a pair feeding juveniles was in Omaha in Aug (JED). A "Kridler's Hawk" was in Cherry Co 6 Nov (AFa); this was likely a migrant.

Rough-legged Hawk: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant and winter visitor.

Ferruginous Hawk: A few birds were easterly this fall; one was in Kearney Co 25 Oct (MB), possibly the same bird as one there 6 Nov (BB); one was taken to the Raptor Recovery Center from Utica, Seward Co, 6 Nov (JGJ); and a light morph juv was at Eppley Airfield, Omaha, 18 Nov (JT).

Golden Eagle: Easternmost was one in Hall Co 29 Oct (TJW); this species is rare in fall in the east.

Yellow Rail: Reports since 1980 (the first state fall record was in 1982) have all been in late Sep-early Oct, but not quite annual. This fall two were reported: one was flushed from mixed prairie and meadow grass at Peru Bottoms WMA,

Nemaha Co, 27 Sep (WRS, details), and another found dead at an Omaha horticultural nursery 12 Oct had probably died 3-5 days earlier (JR, photo).

Black Rail: The status of this species on the Great Plains in summer is enigmatic, but there have been scattered records suggestive of sporadic breeding north and west as far as CLNWR and Morrill Co. On 27 Sep the "kick-ee-doo" call was heard clearly 3 times in meadow grass with some scattered small patches of water at Peru Bottoms WMA, Nemaha Co, (WRS). The call was heard in the same area 3 Oct (ARy, CRy), and on 11 Oct a series of 8 or so calls was clearly heard (WRS, ARy). The following was posted to the NEBirds list 11 Oct (WRS): "If territorial birds were there this summer, the likelihood of hearing the "kick-kick-kerr" in fall would seem to be higher than it would be if only migrants were passing through. This list has had the discussion of 'why do birds sing in fall?' before; it seems that a fall hormonal pulse is probably the reason, but this would seem more likely to apply to summer territorial birds preparing for departure rather than migrants in passage. The calls on 27 Sep and 11 Oct were from the same place in the field, suggesting this was indeed a summer territory; perhaps the birds are still protecting fledged young. Tapes failed to elicit a response on either day. Fall departure of interior summering birds is thought to be during October; there are KS dates 17 and 29 Oct, an IA date 8 Oct, and the only NE fall dates in late Sep."

Virginia Rail: This species winters in small numbers at cattail seeps, mostly along the North Platte and Niobrara Rivers, but one in Adams Co 8 Nov was thought to be a late migrant (LR, RH), although dates of non-wintering birds after mid-Oct are few.

Sora: One at Spikerush WMA, York Co, 1 Aug (TG) may have been an early migrant; departure from breeding grounds may begin as early as late Jul. There is only one recent confirmed breeding record for the RWB since the 1980s.

American Coot: Best counts were the 2306 in Lancaster Co 8 Oct (LE) and 2250 at LO 17 Oct (ERa). High counts are 6315-17,359 (!).

Sandhill Crane: The pair established at Kiowa WMA, Scotts Bluff Co, since 2009 had 2 young on 10 Oct (KD), and an ad was reported from the RWB 16 Aug (JGJ); breeding has occurred on several occasions in the RWB. Migrants appeared on time; the best count reported was 1500 at a playa wetland in Lincoln Co 28 Oct (TJW), but the estimated 500 over Dodge Co 19 Nov was unexpected that far east (D&JP) where it is the second-highest count on record for the east.

Whooping Crane: An exciting event for birders was the cooperative group of 6, including one juv, that stayed at Father Hupp WMA, Thayer Co, 14-29 Nov (fide JGJ; m. ob.); the last date, 29 Nov, is third-latest on record for this species. A group of 5, including one juv, was at BOL, an unexpected location, 13 Nov (JGJ, video).

Black-necked Stilt: The only reports were of 6 near Antioch, including 2 juvs, 15 Aug (RSt), 10 at CLNWR 15 Aug (KBo), and 4 in Sheridan Co 18 Aug (DRy). This species is scarce after mid-Aug.

American Avocet: The 1-9 at BOL 25 Oct-7 Nov (ERa, TG, JGJ) were rather late; last dates are 7-10 Nov.

Black-bellied Plover: Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide migrant.

American Golden-Plover: There were only 3 reports; this species occurs in lower numbers in fall, mostly juvs, as most ads migrate eastward to the Atlantic Coast. One was in Douglas Co 18 Sep (KGo), 3 were in Fillmore Co 16 Oct (JGJ), and 106 were there 25 Oct (JGJ). The latter is a good fall tally; high fall counts are 116-420.

Semipalmated Plover: One in Saunders Co 17 Oct (CNK) was tardy; late dates are 20-25 Oct.

Piping Plover: This species is rarely-reported in fall; the 2 reports were of singles at LNB 19 Aug (CDy) and at LO 24 Aug (JGJ).

Killdeer: Reports were routine of this common statewide summer resident and migrant.

Mountain Plover: None were reported; this species departs rather early, although in recent years flocks have been found into early Sep.

Spotted Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant.

Solitary Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant.

Greater Yellowlegs: One at Father Hupp WMA, Thayer Co, 23 Nov (JGJ) was a bit tardy; late dates are 17-18 Nov, but there are a few Dec and even Jan dates.

Willet: One at Conestoga L, Lancaster Co, 24 Oct (TEL) was second-latest on record. Last expected dates are 27-29 Sep. This species is rare in the east in fall, especially in Sep; reports were 21 Aug at BOL (LE), 2 on 20 Aug in Butler Co (CDy), and 2 at LNB 8 Sep (JGJ). The latter is only about the 22nd record statewide after Aug.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Upland Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant.

Long-billed Curlew: None were reported of this fairly common migrant west and central.

Marbled Godwit: This species is much less common in fall than in spring, as many migrate eastward to the Atlantic Coast. There were 4 reports from the west 14 Aug-7 Sep (RSt, DRy, MW, BHe, JR) including 12 at Sherman Res, Sherman Co, 6 Sep (JGJ). Easterly reports are less than annual, with only about 12 records east of the RWB; one was in Jefferson Co 11 Sep (CNK).

Ruddy Turnstone: Prior to this fall there were only 33 fall records in all, but this year there were 3 reports totaling 4 birds: one at Harvard WPA, Clay Co, 3 Aug (JGJ), one at BOL 18 Aug (LE), and 1-2 at LNB 5-8 Sep (TJW, JGJ), at least one a juv (JGJ).

Stilt Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Sanderling: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Dunlin: This species is a late migrant in fall, molting before departure; the only 2 reports were probably of the same bird, a basic-plumaged bird at Jack Sinn 24 and 26 Oct (EA photo, EJ).

Baird's Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Least Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this fairly common eastern and central migrant, rare west.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Last dates can be uncertain due to confusion with Western Sandpiper; observers of Semipalmated Sandpipers seen after early Oct

should provide details of the sighting. One was seen in Saunders Co 17 Oct by several observers (CNK, SQ, BW).

Western Sandpiper: One at LSFM 20 Oct (EB) was tardy; last dates are 20-29 Oct.

Short-billed Dowitcher: The only reports were of 2 juvs at Harvard WPA, Clay Co, 16 Aug (JGJ), a single at LSWNP 23 Aug (JSS), and a juv at LNB 8 Sep (JGJ); these dates are within the fall migration period, which ends earlier than that for Long-billed Dowitcher.

Long-billed Dowitcher: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Wilson's Snipe: Migrants may appear beginning in late Jul, and so Aug reports may be of migrants or possibly local breeders. Reports of 1-2 from Jack Sinn, where breeding probably occurs most years, were 3-25 Aug (TG, LE). One in Madison Co 9 Aug (WF) may have been a breeder; breeding has occurred in several northeast Nebraska counties. One at VNWR 17 Nov was the observer's "first there in Nov" (WM), and others were tardy in Fillmore Co 24 Nov (WF) and Thayer Co 29 Nov (JGJ). Last dates for migrants are difficult to discern as snipe may attempt to overwinter almost anywhere in the state.

American Woodcock: The only report was of one a bit tardy in the Krimlofski Tract, southeast Washington Co 9 Nov (D&JP); last dates are 18-20 Nov.

Wilson's Phalarope: The 142 at Trumbull Basin 16 Aug was an excellent fall count for the RWB (JGJ).

Red-necked Phalarope: Uncommon in the east, there were reports from 5 locations 21 Aug-20 Sep of a total of 16, most if not all, juvs (MW, JGJ, m. ob.). A juv at HCR 24 Oct (TJW) was second-latest on record.

Sabine's Gull: The only report was of one at CBL 26 Sep (ERa); usually several are reported each fall Sep-Oct.

Bonaparte's Gull: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant.

Black-headed Gull: A cooperative basic ad was at BOL 11-22 Nov (NA photo, m. ob.). This is the 3rd documented record for NE; a 4th was probably correct as well. The records are in the period 12 Aug-21 Dec.

Laughing Gull: A juv remained at BOL 18-25 Aug (LE, MW, RSt); this is the 23rd record for Nebraska for this mostly summer visitor.

Franklin's Gull: The 26,550 in Lancaster Co 8 Oct (LE) was impressive, but high counts are rather incredible: 85,000-300,000.

Ring-billed Gull: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

California Gull: Up to 6 were at LM, the regular haunt for this species, 4 Sep-18 Oct (MW, ERa, BHe, JR); of 6 present 18 Oct, 5 were ads and one a juv (ERa). An ad was easterly at HCR 24 Oct (MB, TJW, m. ob.).

Herring Gull: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Thayer's Gull: Only one arrived in time for this Fall Report: a first winter bird at Bennington L, Douglas Co, 21 Nov (JR).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: The only reports were of 1-3 at LO 17 Oct, including at last one ad and one 3rd-year (ERa). This species is now regular as a migrant in Nebraska.

Least Tern: Good counts were the 23 in western Douglas Co 14 Aug (JR) and 13 nearby at a Valley housing development (JR); such tallies in Aug usually are a mix of post-breeding ads and juvs. High counts are 16-25, all in the short period 9-18 Aug.

Caspian Tern: A group of 9 was at BOL 24 Sep (LE), only one remaining by 8 Oct (LE), a rather late date. Expected last dates are 9-10 Oct. In all, about 15 were reported 25 Aug-8 Oct (m. ob.).

Black Tern: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Common Tern: One at HCR 24 Oct (TJW, MB) is 4th-latest on record; later dates are 25 Oct-2 Nov. Five additional reports were of up to 5 birds in the period 22-27 Sep (JGJ, TJW, MW, BP).

Forster's Tern: One at HCR 24 Oct (TJW) was rather late; last dates are 28 Oct-1 Nov. The 69 at BOL 2 Sep (LE) was a good count; highs are 109-400.

Rock Pigeon: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

White-winged Dove: One of the pair that nested on the UNK Campus in Kearney was reported 15 Aug (RSt) and 9 Sep (RH), but no outcome of the nesting was noted. Two appeared in a Kearney yard some 19 blocks from the UNK Campus 23 Aug, increasing to 5, including at least one juv, on 17 Oct, with one still present 7 Nov (BB). These birds may have been, or included, the nesting birds on the UNK Campus earlier. Two continued in an Ogallala yard, seen 29 Sep (JO), and one in a Gering yard 10-23 Nov was the "first there for a while" (RSg).

Mourning Dove: The 700 in Dawes Co 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) was an excellent count; highs are mainly estimates: 4000+ in Cherry Co 1 Sep 2007, "several hundred" in south-central counties 21 Sep 2002, and "hundreds" in Franklin Co 26 Aug 2012. A pair fledged 2 chicks prior to 14 Aug on a window sill at LM, then proceeded with a second clutch of 2 on 14 Aug (J&GB). Mourning Doves are known to have produced 5 broods in a season, though this might be impossible in Nebraska!

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Oddly, all reports were from the east, although the species tends to be less common westward. One in Cuming Co 5 Oct (LE) was tardy, although last dates are towards the end of Oct.

Black-billed Cuckoo: Four were reported, about the norm in the last few years. Singles were in Omaha 1 Aug (JR), at BOL 18 Aug (LE), at FF 8 Sep (RS), and in Thurston Co 26 Sep (MB, SQ).

Barn Owl: A nest in Dixon Co had 3 nestlings and 4 fledged young nearby 13 Aug (JJ, CNK). Nesting was unknown in the extreme northeast until recently; most are found in dryer parts of the state, especially the south and west. One was seen most evenings 23 Aug-1 Oct flying around WHNC (ALa, JL, HG).

Eastern Screech-Owl: A Wood Duck box in the observer's Dixon Co yard hosts a roosting bird most winters; it usually arrives in Dec, but this year was in the box 4 Oct (JJ).

Great Horned Owl: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

Snowy Owl: Leading off this winter's visitors was a "heavily-marked juv" near Stromsburg 30 Nov (KSL photo, fide MB).

Burrowing Owl: Best counts were 10 at CLNWR 15 Aug (KBo) and 9 in Scotts Bluff Co 8 Aug (KD).

Barred Owl: One northeast of Nelson in Nuckolls Co 16 Oct (JGJ) continues the consolidation and expansion of the range westward in southern Nebraska. This sighting is on a tributary of the Little Blue River, and would be an extension of

the range in Jefferson Co, but Barred Owls have also been found at the east end of the Republican River Valley, which is also in Nuckolls Co.

Long-eared Owl: The only reports were of one 5 and 8 Nov at VNWR (AFa). Wintering birds arrive in late Oct.

Short-eared Owl: The only report was of one in Gage Co 1 Nov (SSc); as with Long-eared Owl, numbers of Short-ears increase somewhat by late Oct.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: The birds in the Wildcat Hills continue; "barks and screeching" were heard near WHNC 19 Sep, a two-year-old fem that was banded last year was netted 20 Sep, and the same fem was netted again 27 Sep (HG, JL).

Common Nighthawk: One in Scotts Bluff Co 10 Oct (AK) was rather late; last dates are 20-24 Oct.

Common Poorwill: One-two at CSP 4-6 Oct (JL) were rather late, as was one at WHNC 7 Oct (HG); previous last dates were 3-5 Oct. None were reported east of Lincoln Co.

Chuck-will's-widow: None were reported; most depart or remain silent after Jun, as there are only 7 records for Jul and later.

Eastern Whip-poor-will: The only one detected late enough for this report was in Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 1 Aug (RS). This species, like Chuck-will's-widow, is hard to find after it falls silent in late summer.

Chimney Swift: Reports were routine of this common eastern migrant, uncommon west.

White-throated Swift: Reports were routine of this fairly common western migrant.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: Recent years have seen more westerly reports, especially in fall; an ad fem was in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 2 Sep, where the observer noted "we have a couple every year" (KD). At more expected locations these days at the west edge of the fall migration corridor were singles in Adams Co 5 and 13 Sep, where Ruby-throated Hummingbird is a "regular migrant Aug-Sep" (FMa), and at Rowe Sanctuary, where a male was present for a few days through 28 Aug (BB). Data on exactly how many hummers pass through a given yard in a season is hard to come by, but exhaustive recording and nightly analysis by 4 video and one still camera operating continuously in a Lincoln yard have produced fascinating information (R&SW). For the years 2007-2014 inclusive, the fall tally varied from 13 to 112, the latter in 2011, but in 2015 an amazing 266 individuals were counted; peak day was 11 Sep, when 36 were recorded (R&SW).

Black-chinned Hummingbird: This species will continue to add new records as it expands its summer range northward on the western Great Plains. An *Archilochus* hummingbird videotaped in Omaha 21-23 Aug (JR) was probably this species; the video was viewed by Steve Mlodinow, who looked at museum specimens and confirmed the identification (fide JR), as well as "renowned hummingbird expert" Sheri L. Williamson. Both agreed that the bird was at least a "probable" Black-chinned Hummingbird. Williamson noted: "I see two different birds in that video: a probable female Black-chinned, and a more ambiguous juvenile male *Archilochus* in the still at the end. Apparent lack of a tail notch is a further point of evidence in favor of Black-chinned for the first bird; she doesn't pump her tail when hovering between feeding bouts, but that's

not an infallible Black-chinned characteristic.” In my opinion, it may well be a hybrid RTHU x BCHU. The report will be examined by the NOURC.

Interestingly, Mlodinow noted that the primaries of the Omaha bird appeared to be a bit narrower than might be expected for Black-chinned, but within the range of variation for the species. As Black-chinneds spread northward, they are hybridizing with Ruby-throateds; a banding study in Oklahoma (Judd et al. 2011), where ranges of the two species overlap, resulted in the following conclusion: “During the course of this study, 30 adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, 77 adult male Black-chinned Hummingbirds, and 11 male hybrids were banded. A total of 118 adult male hummingbirds were banded, with 9.3% of them being apparent hybrids. Banding 11 apparent male hybrids from 2006 to 2009 suggests that hybridization between the two *Archilochus* species in Oklahoma is widespread.” An indication of the current status of Black-chinned Hummingbird in western KS comes from a veteran observer, Tom Shane: “... we finally had a nice wave of *Archilochus* hummingbirds arriving on 8 Sept 2015. ... I am guessing we had a ratio of 70 BCHUs to 30 RTHUs. We still had 2 Black-chins and one probable Ruby-throat today 3 Oct 2015. Black-chins nested this year 30 miles west of the Kansas ~ Colorado line in Lamar, CO. We have not had an adult male BCHU here in Garden City in a number of years.”

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: Only two were reported: a fem was in a Scotts Bluff Co yard 9-11 Aug (KD), and a fem/imm was at a McConaughy feeder 28 Sep-4 Oct (J&GB, photo).

Rufous Hummingbird: All reports were from the aforementioned DeLara yard in Scotts Bluff Co, rounding out a rather poor showing of *Selasphorus* hummers for the season: an imm male 1 Aug, 2 imm males 18 Aug, and a single 29 Aug (KD).

Calliope Hummingbird: Only one was reported, that 16-17 Aug in a Scotts Bluff Co yard (KD) where the species is regular in low numbers in fall.

Belted Kingfisher: Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide breeder and migrant.

Lewis's Woodpecker: Though a regular migrant in the Panhandle, numbers are low. The only reports were of one in Smiley Canyon, Sioux Co, 12 Aug (KS), and another in EAC 5-6 Sep (MW, JR, BHe; photo).

Red-headed Woodpecker: An imm in Greeley Co 18 Oct (LR, RH) was tardy; last dates in the north are 30 Sep and 2 Oct (twice). One was in Otoe Co 10 Nov (SQ); this species is uncommon in the southeast in winter.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: One in Hooker Co 5 Sep (JGJ) was perhaps the first for that Sandhills Co, and 1-2 were between Scottsbluff and Minatare 25-28 Nov (PRa, WRa). This species still occurs only in low numbers in the western North Platte River Valley. Unusual was one in Fillmore Co 11 Aug with a yellow rather than red head stripe (JRi) as sometimes seen in Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Reports were numerous, continuing a recent trend, with at least 40 individuals reported, notably 11 in a sweep through Boone, Platte, and Nance Cos 3 Oct (MB, DH) and 7 in about 5 hours' birding in Fillmore, Thayer, and Jefferson Co, also on 3 Oct (JGJ). Almost all the reports were

from the east, but singles were in Custer 16 Oct (LE) and 28 Nov (imm, WF) and Keith 17 Oct (ERa). One in Lincoln 31 Aug (JSS) was a very early migrant, early dates are 18-20 Sep. One reported as a Yellow-bellied at Ft. Robinson, Dawes Co, 22 Sep had a "distinctive red cap" (CGe); this description may apply to either sapsucker species, but the date and location suggest Red-naped.

Red-naped Sapsucker: The only report was of one in southern Scotts Bluff Co 6 Oct (AK); there are only about 30 fall records of this rare but annual migrant.

Downy Woodpecker: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

Hairy Woodpecker: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

American Three-toed Woodpecker: There were no reports of this species, most recently seen in East Ash Canyon, Dawes Co, in July 2015.

Northern Flicker: An amazing count of 270 was made of birds that flew continuously over Omaha for about 5 hours 7 Oct (JR), needless to say, a record fall count. High counts previously were 48-73, all in the period 3-12 Nov. Another good tally was the 50 in Garfield Co 7 Sep (LR, RH).

Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker: Rather early in the east were one in Dixon Co 19-28 Sep (JJ) and another at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 23 Sep (DLi); previous early dates for the east were 21-24 Sep.

Pileated Woodpecker: All reports were from Washington, Douglas, and Sarpy Cos (m. ob.); this species is an uncommon resident in the lower Missouri River Valley.

American Kestrel: A pair in Omaha apparently were into a second nesting cycle 2 Aug; 2-3 young were present 18 Aug (GD). This species is one of few raptors that does double-brood (fide JGJ); a nest box in Lincoln had the last of a first brood of young birds about to fledge when a second set of 2 eggs was laid 26 May; these fledged successfully as well (JGJ). This nest box has produced 3 double broods in the last 5 years, which is a high rate; kestrels in Florida double-brood about 11 % of the time (JGJ).

Merlin: A "fairly dark" bird at BOL 19 Sep (MW) was likely the long-distance migrant subspecies *Falco columbarius columbarius*, for which early dates are 12-19 Sep. Early dates for the lighter-colored wintering subspecies *F. c. richardsonii*, are 11-14 Aug. Some *F. c. columbarius* winter.

Peregrine Falcon: Most reports are from Omaha and Lincoln, presumably the resident birds there. True migrants away from those cities generally move through with shorebirds; the 5 such reports were in the period 15 Aug-27 Sep (m. ob.), as expected.

Prairie Falcon: The fall data suggest a gradual eastward movement, culminating in the latest dates belonging generally to birds in or close to the east: singles in Saline Co 29 Oct (JGJ), Jefferson Co 18 Nov (LE), Franklin Co 25 Oct (MB), and Thayer 29 Nov (TJo, MRo). Another was easterly in Clay Co 18 Oct (EBa). Early dates in the east are 22-28 Sep.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Westernmost was one in Hall Co 17 Sep (SM), where the species is uncommon.

Western Wood-Pewee: Reports were routine of this common western migrant, rare casual central.

Eastern Wood-Pewee: A juv was being fed by ads in Lincoln 12 Sep (SSc), a rather late date.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: There were 3 reports of this rare migrant. Singles were at WP 29 Aug (LE) and near Potter St in Lincoln 7-11 Sep (ERa). The third report was on a very late date, 22 Oct in Omaha (JR); photos were sent to an expert who confirmed the identification, although it now seems more likely that the bird was actually a "Western" Flycatcher, likely a Pacific Slope Flycatcher (submitted to NOURC). The latter species has occurred about 3 times each in Louisiana and Pennsylvania.

Acadian Flycatcher: Three were at ICSP 16 Aug (JC photo, SSc) where the species breeds, and one at WP 9 Sep (LE) may also have been a breeder, as this species has been there most summers, albeit only 1-2, since 2009. One at Wyuka Cem, Lincoln, 8 Sep (LE) was probably a migrant.

Alder Flycatcher: The only report was of one in Dixon Co 3 Sep (JJ). This species is less than annual in fall.

Willow Flycatcher: Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide breeder and migrant.

Least Flycatcher: One calling at FF 1 Oct (EB) was rather late; last dates are 1-3 Oct. Strangely, all of the reports were from the east.

Hammond's Flycatcher: Only 2 were reported, singles in Sioux Co 6 Sep (MW) and Kimball Co 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe). This is a regular fall migrant in the Panhandle 25 Aug-23 Sep.

Dusky Flycatcher: The banding operations at CSP and WHNC are yielding important documentation of western migrants. Two were netted and measured at WHNC, one each 2 Sep (HG) and 4 Sep (JL). Like Hammond's Flycatcher, this species is a regular fall migrant in the Panhandle 24 Aug-24 Sep.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: Reports were from known breeding locations, although singles at CSP 28 Aug and 7 Sep (JL) may have been migrants. There are only a few reports from CSP during the breeding season, none with breeding evidence. Four other individuals were found 5-7 Sep in EAC and Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, (MW, BHe, JR).

Eastern Phoebe: One at PL 2 Nov (LE) was rather late; last dates are Nov 3-4.

Say's Phoebe: Two in Knox Co 17 Sep (RD) were easterly; there are few such records in fall.

Great Crested Flycatcher: This species is less than annual in fall in the Panhandle, where any *Myiarchus* flycatcher is worth a second look. Two were reported, only the 9th and 10th Panhandle fall records: one at Oliver Res 13 Aug, reported cautiously as "Presumed; much red in spread tail" (BFH), and one banded at CSP 15 Sep (JL).

Cassin's Kingbird: This species forms notable aggregations in fall, but a record high count was the 114 in southeastern Banner Co 24 Aug (JGJ); previous high counts were 43-52. The same observer located 44 south of Redington in the Wildcat Hills the same day (JGJ).

Western Kingbird: An impressive count for the east was the 44 at Eppley Airfield, Omaha, 4 Aug (SMA).

Eastern Kingbird: The 119 at BOL 28 Aug (LE) was a good tally; high counts, however, range from 150 to 500+.

- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** Following the successful breeding near Valley (see Summer Seasonal Report), an imm there 28 Aug appeared brightly-colored with a greenish tinge to the mantle and a yellow wash on its underparts, raising questions as to it being a hybrid between Scissor-tailed and one of the yellow-breasted kingbirds (JR); it was concluded that it was most likely to have been a brightly-colored imm Scissor-tailed.
- Loggerhead Shrike:** One in Scotts Bluff Co 10 Oct (KD) was only the 10th Oct and Nov record for the Panhandle; most depart the west in Sep.
- Northern Shrike:** Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide winter visitor.
- Bell's Vireo:** One at Seneca, Thomas Co, 23 Sep (JGJ) and another in Holt Co 12 Sep (WF) were quite late for the north, where last dates are 5-7 Sep.
- Yellow-throated Vireo:** Reports were routine of this fairly common eastern migrant.
- Plumbeous Vireo:** Previous last dates for this uncommon Panhandle breeder and migrant were 17-21 Sep, but the Panhandle banding efforts yielded 3 later dates: 2 on 22 Sep and one on 23 Sep at CSP (JL), and one was seen at WHNC 30 Sep (HG). Plumbeous Vireos were numerous in EAC 5 Sep, when 6 were present and vocalizing (MW, BHe, JR).
- Cassin's Vireo:** The 3 Panhandle reports involving 4 birds in all 24 Aug-13 Sep (HG, MW, JR, BHe, JRo) were as expected for this regular western fall migrant.
- Blue-headed Vireo:** The numerous reports spanned the expected migration date range, 28 Aug-14 Oct (m. ob.); all were from Hall and Thayer Cos eastward.
- Warbling Vireo:** Last expected dates are on 5 Oct, and so tardy were singles in Omaha 8 Oct (JR) and in Merrick Co 10 Oct (LR, RH). There are a few scattered later dates including one banded 17 Nov. One a bit late at Ft. Robinson SRA, Dawes Co, 15 Sep was identified as the expected western subspecies (CRu), which appears to depart earlier than those elsewhere in the state; previous last dates for the west were 14-16 Sep.
- Philadelphia Vireo:** The number of reports received continues to increase; the 25 or so were for the period 19 Aug-13 Oct, the latter the 5th report for Oct after 5 Oct. Observers should be aware that fall eastern Warbling Vireos can look very similar to Philadelphia Vireos. See for example <http://www.powdermillarc.org/highlights/2009/earlyfall.aspx> (scroll down).
- Red-eyed Vireo:** Two were rather late 12 Oct at ICSP (KKi); previous last dates were 7-11 Oct.
- Pinyon Jay:** None were reported of this fairly common but erratic Panhandle visitor.
- Blue Jay:** Reports were routine of this common statewide resident and migrant.
- Black-billed Magpie:** Discouragingly, only one report was significantly east of the Panhandle, that of one in Buffalo Co 7 Nov (BB). Two reports were from Lincoln Co: 3 along Lydic Road, 14 Aug (TJW) and one north of North Platte 9 Nov (AFa). Also 1-2 were in the LM area 17-18 Oct (ERa). Panhandle reports were widespread, from Dawes, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, and Cheyenne Cos. Intriguing was a report of 32 "migrating" at Ft. Robinson SRA, Dawes Co, 2 Oct (CGe), the most reported together in several years. Magpies are not migratory in the true sense, but may disperse at times if necessary. One wonders what triggered this movement and where the birds came from.

American Crow: This species often moves south in large aggregations in Nov; best count was 250 on 9 Nov in Lincoln Co (AFa), which pales beside the high counts on record of 500-2000.

Horned Lark: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Purple Martin: The Midtown Omaha Roost had 10,000 birds on 1 Aug (JDa) and 12 Aug and peaked at 45,000-50,000 on 25 Aug (JR), a bit lower than the prior few years.

Tree Swallow: The 800 at BOL 19 Sep (MW) was second-highest fall count on record (highest is 1000).

Violet-green Swallow: None were reported of this uncommon western breeder and rare migrant.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Bank Swallow: The count of 1000 in northern Dixon Co 11 Aug (JJ) is impressive, and is 3rd-highest fall tally on record; high count for the state is 10,000!

Cliff Swallow: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Cave Swallow: Ad Cave Swallows are fairly straightforward to identify vs ad Cliff Swallows; however, the range of variation among the thousands of juv Cliff Swallows that occur in Nebraska in fall makes separation of juv Cave Swallow at that time of year extremely difficult. A single bird 25 Aug of uncertain age with a capped appearance and pale buffy throat was identified as this species; the report is referred to NOURC. An update on another, "possible" juv Cave Swallow, May 2015 (Sma) suggested that it was best left unidentified (Leukering, BIRDWG01); Mary Brown believed it was probably an early-hatched southern juv Cliff that moved north with Nebraska Cliff Swallows, a similar provenance suggested for the spring juv Cave Swallow records for Nebraska.

Barn Swallow: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Black-capped Chickadee: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

Tufted Titmouse: A handful of reports were from Lancaster Co, where the species has a tenuous hold (LE, MUs, ERa); few are reported west of there. One in Gage Co 3 Aug (SQ) was one of only a few reports in that county.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Two birds were defending a possible territory against kingbirds in pines near Zorinsky L, Omaha, 2 Aug 2015 (JDa). Although fall migrants appear early in Aug on occasion, breeding in the southeast is not unprecedented, with confirmed instances in Seward and Lancaster Cos.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Reports were routine of this common resident east, locally common central in river valleys, fairly common Pine Ridge.

Pygmy Nuthatch: This common Panhandle resident appears to be doing well; multiple numbers were banded most days at WHNC (HG) and CSP (JL); best count was a record 20 on 5 Sep in EAC (MW, JR, BHe). Previous high counts were 11-14.

Brown Creeper: The 10 at Cottonmill Park, Kearney, 20 Nov (BB) was a good count; previous highs were 7-12. One at Mercer Woods, Omaha, 26 Sep (JR) was rather early; early dates away from breeding locations are 20-22 Sep.

Rock Wren: One in Thomas Co 5 Sep (JGJ) may have been a breeder there; this location is probably at the east edge of the regular breeding range.

- House Wren:** "Perhaps a third brood" was in a Fillmore Co yard 11 Aug (JRi); there is a record for Nebraska of House Wrens raising 4 broods in a summer.
- Winter Wren:** Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern migrant.
- Sedge Wren:** Previous last dates were 28-30 Oct, and so these 3 reports were of tardy birds: 29 Oct and 7 Nov at Prairie Queen L, Sarpy Co, (EB, CO), and 1 Nov at LSFM, where they had been present "all fall" (BHe). This species is well-known for its appearance in mid-Jul and initiating breeding behavior; a juv was with 4 singing ads in Lancaster Co 5 Aug (SSc). Rare westward, a surprise was one in Kimball Co 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe); all other reports were from Hall Co (EBa) eastward. The 35 at LSFM 4 Oct (MW) was a good count; previous high counts were 31-123.
- Marsh Wren:** One singing an eastern song was in Wheeler Co 11 Sep (WF); this is on the west edge of the usual range for this song type, and may have been a migrant.
- Carolina Wren:** All reports were within the southeast Nebraska area bounded by Dodge, Seward, and Lancaster Cos, more or less the range occupied in the last few years.
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The highest number ever banded in a season at WHNC was the 21 during this fall (HG), reflective of the increasing numbers of this species in the west as well as over most of the state. One in Dundy Co 11 Oct (PBu, SRi) was latest on record by 8 days.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** Reports were routine of this fairly common statewide migrant.
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.
- Eastern Bluebird:** Reports were routine of this common eastern and central migrant, uncommon west.
- Mountain Bluebird:** Reports were routine of this common western and central migrant and fairly common breeder west.
- Townsend's Solitaire:** Reports were routine of this common western migrant, uncommon central.
- Veery:** None were reported of this rare western and eastern migrant.
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** There were no reports of this less-than-annual fall migrant.
- Swainson's Thrush:** One in Omaha 12 Aug (JR) was rather early; expected early dates are 24-25 Aug. There are two previous early reports, both, oddly, on 12 Aug also.
- Hermit Thrush:** Migrants in the west arrive some 2 weeks earlier than those in the east, and different subspecies are involved; of 7 dates for Sep this fall, all but one were banded at WHNC and CSP beginning 15 Sep (HG, JL), while first in the east was in Omaha 29 Sep (JR). Last in the west was at CSP 9 Oct (JL), and in the east, 31 Oct in Omaha (JR).
- Wood Thrush:** Rather late were 2 in Hormel Park, Dodge Co, 2 Oct (WF); last dates are 6-10 Oct.
- American Robin:** Although the 930 at BOL 29 Nov (LE) is a good count, fall highs are rather amazing, in the range "thousands for a few days" through 150,000.
- Gray Catbird:** Westerly and tardy were several individuals; one was in Ogallala 18 Oct (ERa), one in Dundy Co 11 Oct (TDe, m. ob.), and one of two at CSP 7-9 Oct was banded (JL). Previous last dates in the west are 29 Sep-1 Oct, with

only 2 dates later than 18 Oct. The 20 in Lancaster Co 21 Sep (LE) was a good count; highs are 24-30.

Brown Thrasher: The 11 in Omaha 29 Sep (JR) was a good count, as was the 9 at BOL 28 Aug (LE); previous highs were 9-18.

Sage Thrasher: There were 6 reports of this uncommon western Panhandle migrant, including 9 in Kimball Co 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe). High counts are 10-13. Remaining reports were of 1-4 at 4 locations in Sioux, Dawes, Scotts Bluff, and Kimball Cos 13 Aug-6 Sep (RSt, BFH, HKH, KSz).

Northern Mockingbird: Reports were routine of this fairly common southern breeder and uncommon migrant.

European Starling: Reports were routine of this abundant fall migrant.

American Pipit: Rather late was one at Bennington L, Douglas Co, 21 Nov (JR, BP); last dates are 23-25 Nov. There are a few Dec reports but none for Jan-Feb.

Sprague's Pipit: There were 4 reports 13 Sep-23 Oct: one at Jack Sinn 13 Sep (KGo), one in Cuming Co 28 Sep (LE), one at SCP 3 Oct (JSS), and 2 at PL 23 Oct (LE). The Jack Sinn bird was a bit early; previous early dates were 14-15 Sep.

Bohemian Waxwing: None were reported of this erratic northwestern winter visitor.

Cedar Waxwing: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Lapland Longspur: The 900 in Fillmore Co 27 Nov (AB) was a good count; highs are 1000+ to 9000.

Chestnut-collared Longspur: The two reports were of 3 along Murphy Road, Sioux Co, 3 Sep (HKH), where the species breeds, and 2 near Ft. Robinson SP, Dawes Co, 16 Sep (CRu). Departure from breeding grounds begins in early Sep.

Smith's Longspur: There are fewer than 30 reports in all for fall; this year there were two. Two calling birds flew over SCP 14 Oct (DGe), and 12 were with Lapland Longspurs at Father Hupp WMA, Thayer Co, 27 Nov (TJo photo, MRo). The latter sighting is one of the latest; there are 4 records for Dec and one in Feb, although wintering has not been documented.

McCown's Longspur: The only report was of 10 along Murphy Rd, Sioux Co, 3 Sep (HKH); breeding occurs in this area.

Snow Bunting: Arrival is usually in mid-Nov, and so few if any Snow Buntings make the fall report most years. This year, however, 12 were at VNWR rather early, on 6 Nov (AFa); early dates are 26-27 Oct. The only other report was of one at LNB 27 Nov (BP).

Ovenbird: HY birds were banded at CSP 5 and 6 Sep (JL) and at Neale Woods, Douglas Co, 1 Aug (RS). Breeding occurs in the north and east.

Louisiana Waterthrush: A study at ICSP during the summer was summarized as follows: "We (SSc, JCa, WRS) surveyed the drainages in Indian Cave SP and all of the Louisiana Waterthrushes detected were restricted to 3 adjacent streams near the south end of the park in a limited area where the streams have emergent rocks and steep banks and pass through areas of continuous forest." Six territories were discerned; a total of 9 ad and 4 juv waterthrushes were identified plus one of unknown age, and one active nest was located. All ICSP

birds had departed by 25 Aug (SSc). Only 2 of the 4 known territories on Stone Creek, PRSP, produced juvs this year (SSc).

Northern Waterthrush: Of interest was one that was observed at the NGPC Headquarters in Lincoln 30 Sep-8 Oct (JGJ); not only was it there for those 9 days, but it was 5th-latest on record. Expected last dates are 27-30 Sep.

Blue-winged Warbler: The only report was of one at WP 7 Sep (LE); this is only the 14th fall report of this species on record.



This Smith's Longspur was photographed by Tom Johnson in Thayer Co., 27 Nov 2015. There are fewer than 30 fall records for the state, 4 in Dec, but wintering has not been documented.

Black-and-white Warbler: A first fall fem at Mercer Woods, Omaha, 18-19 Aug (JR) was most likely a rather early migrant; early expected dates for migrants are 12-15 Aug. Evidence for breeding in the Missouri River Valley is lacking.

Prothonotary Warbler: No reports were received, nor were there any reports received during the summer, despite the fact that nest-building was underway at FF in May.

Tennessee Warbler: One in Dundly Co 11 Oct (JV, MK) was westerly. This location is close to the Panhandle, where there are 14 fall records.

Orange-crowned Warbler: The long fall migration period of this species was book-ended by one in Deuel Co 24 Aug (JGJ) and 3 at FF 5 Nov (PSt); early and late expected dates are 23-24 Aug and 8-10 Nov. Two subspecies have been presumed to occur in Nebraska, although there have been no documented reports of the Rocky Mountains subspecies *Oreothlypis celata orestera*. This

year, the banding efforts at CSP (JL) and WHNC (HG) confirmed the occurrence of *O. c. orestera*. At CSP, *O. c. orestera* were banded 4-29 Sep (JL) and at WHNC 8 Sep-8 Oct (HG), with one there 10 Oct (KD). On 22 Sep, 6 *O. c. celata* and 5 *O. c. orestera* were banded at CSP (JL). All other reports of *O. c. celata* were from the east (JR, SMa, CNK), and no *O. c. orestera* were reported other than those at CSP and WHNC. The last dates cited here for *O. c. orestera* are about one month earlier than last dates for the species in the east (presumed *O. c. celata*).

Nashville Warbler: Most reports are from the east, a few in the central, but this species is less-than-annual in the Panhandle. Thus one at McCook 22 Oct (LE) was unexpected that close to the Panhandle, where there are only 12 records. Two subspecies occur in Nebraska; the vast majority of migrants are eastern *Oreothlypis ruficapilla ruficapilla*, but there are 3 Panhandle reports of the western subspecies *O. r. ridgwayi* (also known as Calaveras Warbler) of a total of 12 reports for the species there. At least 3 sightings of Calaveras Warbler were reported from WP 23 Sep-3 Oct (NA); video was taken, along with descriptions, but the reports, based mostly on tail-wagging and slight differences in plumage coloration, were equivocal, as eastern *O. r. ruficapilla* also wags its tail on occasion (RW).

Connecticut Warbler: None of this rare eastern fall migrant were reported.

MacGillivray's Warbler: Only two were reported, singles at CSP 7 Sep (AK) and in Dundy Co 11 Oct (SRi). The latter is rather late, although there is another 11 Oct record and one for 13 Oct. Last expected dates are 4-6 Oct.

Mourning Warbler: Singles at WP 24 Aug and BOL 25 Aug (both LE) were rather early; early dates are 21-22 Aug.

Kentucky Warbler: This species is rare in fall, restricted to the east. There were 4 reports 31 Aug-25 Sep (in the expected migration window) for which the identification was either equivocal or no details were provided; this is a tough fall identification.

Common Yellowthroat: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

American Redstart: One of only 2 records for Oct in the east was a presumed HY bird at Mercer Woods, Omaha, 4 Oct (JR). There are additional Oct dates in the west 5-19 Oct, presumably migrants from different breeding populations than those in eastern Nebraska; last expected dates for the state are 30 Sep-2 Oct.

Northern Parula: Rarely-reported in fall, there were only 2 reports, both from Douglas Co: 12 Sep (KGo) and 16 Sep (JR). Last expected dates are 2-4 Oct.

Magnolia Warbler: One in an Otoe Co yard 13 and 16 Oct (SQ) was rather late; last dates for this late-migrating migrant are 22-24 Oct.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Reports were routine of this uncommon statewide migrant.

Blackburnian Warbler: Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern migrant.

Yellow Warbler: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: An imm fem at FF 21 Aug (RS) was rather early; early dates are 18-21 Aug.

Blackpoll Warbler: None of this less-than-annual statewide fall migrant were reported.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: There were 2 reports of this rare but annual-in-fall migrant: an ad male was in Cass Co 28 Sep (KSc, details) and a fem was at Towl Park, Omaha, 6 Oct (NR).

Palm Warbler: This species is less-than-annual in fall, and so an unexpected influx, reflected by no less than 7 reports, most with good details, was very unusual. The reports were: 19 Sep Fillmore Co (JGJ, details), 19 Sep Sarpy Co (GJo, details), 24 Sep Dakota Co (WF, details), 27 Sep LSWP (MW photo, BHe), 7 Oct Johnson Co (WF, details), 9 Oct Sarpy Co (SMA, JMa photo), and 9 Oct Washington Co (CPr, details).

Pine Warbler: One in Omaha 4 Oct (JR) was about the 25th record in the east, and 41st overall for the state in fall. This species has been reported more often in recent years.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: Reports were as expected from the Panhandle in the period 5 Sep-6 Oct, several banded (JL, HG, MW, JR, BHe).

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: The 70 at BOL 26 Sep (ERa) was a good count; highs are 100-129.

Yellow-throated Warbler: None were reported. This species leaves early and is rarely observed in fall; last dates are in mid-Sep however.

Townsend's Warbler: Reports were routine of this fairly common western migrant.

Black-throated Green Warbler: In contrast to other uncommon fall migrant warblers, there were numerous reports of Black-throated Greens, some 30, most of single birds, all but one from the east as expected, in the period 15 Aug-6 Oct (m. ob.). One was early at Mercer Woods, Omaha, 15 Aug (JR); early expected dates are 23-25 Aug. There is one earlier date, 4 Aug. The only report away from the east this fall was of one in Sherman Co 14 Sep (WF). A good count was the 4 in FF 4 Oct (SSc); there are two higher counts, both of 5 (!).

Canada Warbler: The 6 reports 20 Aug-26 Sep (JR, ERa, LE, CNK), all of singles, were more than usual for fall.

Wilson's Warbler: Fall migrants are much more numerous in the west than in the east; 32 were counted in EAC (MW, JR, BHe), compared with best eastern tally of 5 at WP 12 Sep (ERa).

Yellow-breasted Chat: Reports were routine of this uncommon western migrant.

Green-tailed Towhee: The only report of this less-than-annual in fall Panhandle migrant was of one at Oliver Res 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe; photos). There are about 30 fall records in all, in the period 28 Aug-16 Oct.

Spotted Towhee: The 35 "mostly young" birds banded at WHNC 24 Aug and the 20 more the next day (HG) were part of a record total of 76 banded there for the season in the period 24 Aug-7 Oct (HG). This final date matches the expected mid-Oct arrival in the southeast, where Spotted Towhee does not breed.

Eastern Towhee: Interesting information regarding status of this species and Spotted Towhee was received from two locations, Plum Creek in Seward Co (JG) and Beaver Creek near Hendley in Furnas Co (LR, RH). Current consensus is that pure-looking Easterns mostly breed east of a line from Cedar Co through Platte, Hall, and Harlan Cos, but this is only a probability divider; along and within quite some distance from the line, anything can happen. In Seward Co, "Plum Creek has been an interesting location over the years as I

have heard and seen both Eastern and Spotted Towhees as well as apparent hybrids with song and characteristics somewhere between the two species.” (JG), and in Furnas Co, “When I played Spotted Towhee vocalizations for them there was absolutely no reaction from any of them. But when I played Eastern Towhee vocalizations for them there was a strong reaction from them, especially the adult male.” (LR, RH). The 26 at Two Rivers SP, Douglas Co, 5 Oct (DSt) is suggestive of fall movement; most Eastern Towhees depart during Oct, but a few winter in the extreme southeast.

Cassin’s Sparrow: None were reported of this rare migrant, which is rarely-reported after Jul.

American Tree Sparrow: One at Ft. Robinson SRA, Dawes Co, 22 Sep (CGe) was rather early; early dates are 22-23 Sep.

Chipping Sparrow: Two at Holmes L, Lincoln, 17 Nov (LE, details) were in line with previous documented last dates for migrants (there are several Dec and a few overwintering records). The 300 at EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) was a good tally; previous highs were 126-700.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Brewer’s Sparrow: There were only 3 reports of this uncommon western Panhandle migrant; singles were at Oliver Res 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe), Exit 1 on I-80, Kimball Co 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe), and at Oliver Res 13 Sep (JRo).

Field Sparrow: One in Buffalo Co 13 Nov (BB) was tardy; last dates are 19-22 Nov. The 30 in Dodge Co 18 Sep (RSa) was a good count; highs are 30-100. Previously there have been only 21 Panhandle reports in fall, where the species is rare in summer and in migration; this fall there were 5, including banded birds at CSP 4 Oct (JL, HG), 29 Sep (3; JL), and 22 Sep (JL), one at Toadstool Park, Sioux Co, 24 Sep (FMa), and 2 at EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe). Breeders in the Panhandle and north-central Nebraska are of the western subspecies *Spizella pusilla arenacea*, which has reduced facial markings compared with eastern birds.

Vesper Sparrow: The 300 at EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) was a good count; highs range into the thousands, however, with huge flocks occasionally encountered in western Nebraska.

Lark Sparrow: One in Douglas Co 21 Oct (JR) was rather late; previous last dates were 19-22 Oct. Counts of 50 at two locations, EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) and CLNWR 15 Aug (KBo), were additions to the list of high counts, which were 50-89.

Lark Bunting: Reports were routine of this abundant migrant west, uncommon central.

Savannah Sparrow: One in Fillmore Co 24 Nov (WF, details) was tardy; previous last dates were 21-22 Nov. There are a few Dec-Jan records but only one of overwintering.

Grasshopper Sparrow: One in Lancaster Co 20 Oct (EB) was rather late; previous last dates were 18-19 Oct.

Henslow’s Sparrow: Two in Thurston Co 5 Aug (SSh) were a little north of Stanton Co, where the previous northernmost summer records were found. In both counties, CRP grassland was occupied.

- Le Conte's Sparrow:** Previous last dates were 5-9 Nov, and so the surprising number of late dates this fall are of interest: 3 were at Prairie Queen L, Sarpy Co, 7 Nov (EB) with one still there 13 Nov (BRe), one was in Clay Co 10 Nov (WF), and one was at LSWNP 15 Nov (CVD).
- Nelson's Sparrow:** One in Hall Co 18 Oct (EBa) was a bit westerly. There were about 15 reports of 1-2 birds 27 Sep-18 Oct (m. ob.), a good showing for this species in fall.
- Fox Sparrow:** Westerly reports, where this species is rare, were of one at Oliver Res 8 Nov (RTe), and 2 at Wood L, Cherry Co, 29 Oct (WF).
- Song Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common eastern and central migrant, uncommon west.
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** Reports were routine of this common eastern and central migrant, uncommon west.
- Swamp Sparrow:** One at Zorinsky L, Omaha, 7 Aug (SQ) was hard to explain; breeding does not apparently occur there, although this species has bred at Jack Sinn.
- White-throated Sparrow:** This species is a rare migrant in the Panhandle, and thus significant were a HY bird in Cheyenne Co 13 Sep (JRo) and the 7 banded at CSP 17 Sep (also rather early) through 9 Oct (JL). The Cheyenne Co bird was early, as was the first banded at CSP 17 Sep; previous early dates were 14-15 Sep.
- Harris's Sparrow:** None were reported from the Panhandle, where rare, but close were 2 in Dundey Co 14 Oct (DGe) and at Wood Lake, Cherry Co, 29 Oct (WF).
- White-crowned Sparrow:** Rather early were an imm in EAC 5 Sep and singles at Oliver Res 7 Sep and Exit 1, I-80, Kimball Co, 7 Sep (all sightings MW, JR, BHe). Early dates are 25 Aug-2 Sep. All banded birds at CSP were of the common pale-lored subspecies *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii* (JL). The dark-lored subspecies *Z. l. leucophrys* is rare in Nebraska.
- Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco:** The only report was of an early migrant in Scotts Bluff Co 12 Sep, where breeding is unknown (KD); early dates are 30 Sep-2 Oct.
- Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco:** Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.
- Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco:** A junco photographed in Omaha 22 Oct (PL) appeared to be a mix of "Oregon" Junco and "Slate-colored" Junco, perhaps closer to Oregon, but likely assignable to the variable "Cassiar" Junco population (WRS, EB). No other "Cassiar" Juncos were reported.
- Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco:** One in EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) was earliest on record; expected early dates are 10-13 Sep. Easterly, one in Lancaster Co 24 Sep (ERa) was record early there; early dates are 11-19 Oct.
- Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco:** One at Oliver Res 7 Sep (MW, JR, BHe) and another banded at CSP 8 Sep (JL) were early; early dates are 13-17 Sep. One was reported in Nebraska City 20 Nov (SQ, details); reports of this form in the east, where it is less-than-annual in occurrence, should hopefully be accompanied by a photo.
- Summer Tanager:** Only the second fall Panhandle record was a yellowish individual at Oliver Res 7 Sep (MW photos, JR, BHe). A flurry of tardy

Summer Tanagers was in Omaha: latest was a probable HY male at Mercer Woods 21 Oct (JR, photo), and singles were at both Mercer Woods and Orchard Hill Greenstrip 30 Sep (JR). Expected last dates are 28-30 Sep, but there are only 6 dates in Oct, one of which was of one that lingered until 27 Dec.

Scarlet Tanager: One was westerly in Phelps Co 13 Aug (LB); this species is uncommon west to central Nebraska in fall migration.

Western Tanager: Reports were routine of this uncommon western migrant.

Northern Cardinal: There were three reports from the Panhandle, including two from Scotts Bluff Co, where this species has a couple of small populations along the North Platte River: 12 Sep (KD) and 26 Nov (PRa). Perhaps more significantly, 2 in Deuel Co 11 Aug (RSt) were one of only about 5 records in the South Platte River Valley west of Ogallala, where it is fairly common. It occurs along the South Platte River Valley in northeast Colorado, but only in small numbers.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Tardy were 2-3 at Towl Park, Omaha, 6-8 Oct (NR, JR) and one at Orchard Hill Greenstrip, Omaha, 10 Oct (JR); previous last dates were 7-11 Oct. These birds had "orangey" underparts as well as fairly extensive black streaks below, suggestive of HY birds or possibly intergrades with Black-headed Grosbeak (JR, NR). Perhaps such birds migrate a bit later than phenotypically pure *Pheucticus* grosbeaks.

Black-headed Grosbeak: Reports were routine of this common western and central migrant.

Blue Grosbeak: An ad with 3 dependent young in Sarpy Co 8 Sep (CNK) provided a late breeding record.

Lazuli Bunting: By far the best single-location count on record was the 22 in EAC 5 Sep, consisting of family groups in the area (MW, JR, BHe). Lazuli Bunting ad females lingered longer than usual at both CSP and WHNC banding stations; at CSP, 3 were banded 25 Sep (JL) and at WHNC, 2 that had been captured previously during the fall were re-captured 4 Oct (HG), along with a third caught for the first time. Previous last dates were 21-23 Sep.

Indigo Bunting: Last dates away from Missouri River Valley counties are 18-21 Sep. This fall, there were two reports of tardy individuals: one was banded at CSP 27 Sep (JL), and one was in Lincoln Co 22 Sep (TJW). One in Washington Co 9 Oct (CPr) was rather late; last dates in the Missouri River Valley counties are 12-13 Oct.

Dickcissel: The 46 in Lancaster Co 6 Aug was a good count; at this date these are probably local breeders and offspring. Most depart by early Sep. Following the relatively low number of summering birds reported in the north and west, where occurrence is highly variable from year to year (Summer Report), only two were reported for this period: singles at VNWR 1 Aug (MBs) and in Sheridan Co 5 Aug (TG).

Bobolink: Latest on record was one in fall/basic plumage at Prairie Queen L, Sarpy Co, 10 Oct (CO, photo).

Red-winged Blackbird: Largest flocks occur in Nov-Dec; 17,500 were in Lincoln Co 9 Nov (TJW); a flock of 45,000+ was in Lincoln Co 27 Oct 2014 (TJW). High fall tally is 100,000.

Eastern Meadowlark: Departure in fall is difficult to determine, and some might remain rather late in the south; one was singing "a bit off kilter" at BOL 13 Nov (TG) and there are a few Nov and two Dec records of singing/calling birds west to Lincoln Co. Most appear to depart by late Oct.

Western Meadowlark: A large flock of 95 birds was at Sutherland Res 16 Nov (RGe) and 113 were in Thayer Co 18 Nov (LE); it appears that most move south in Oct-Nov, a bit later than Eastern Meadowlark, but many Westerns linger later into Dec and some overwinter in the extreme southeast.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Rusty Blackbird: Reports were routine of this uncommon eastern migrant.

Brewer's Blackbird: Reports were routine of this common western and central migrant, uncommon east.

Common Grackle: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Great-tailed Grackle: The 200 in Lincoln Co 27 Nov (TSh) was a good count; highs are 200-300.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Reports were routine of this abundant statewide migrant.

Orchard Oriole: Reports were routine of this common statewide migrant.

Bullock's Oriole: None were reported of this fairly common western fall migrant; departure is early, mostly during Aug.

Baltimore Oriole: There are an impressive 12 records for Nov-Dec of this species, but surprising this late fall were two more, at different Omaha feeders: one in a mid-Omaha yard 19-29 Nov (JB) and a male in west Omaha 29 Nov (AD fide CNK).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: None were reported of this rare western winter visitor, which usually arrives in Nov.

House Finch: Reports were routine of this common statewide resident.

Purple Finch: There were 5 reports, all of singles: in Bellevue 18 Oct (JLL), at BOL 2 and 16 Nov (LE), in Cass Co 28 Nov (KSc) and in Brown Co 13 Nov (LE).

Cassin's Finch: None were reported of this rare Panhandle winter visitor. Arrival is erratic, but often in Oct-Nov.

Red Crossbill: Most were on the Pine Ridge, where no fewer than 179 were banded at CSP (JL); other reports from CSP were of 6 on 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe), one on 7 Sep (KD), and 9 on 25 Oct (JSS). Nearby, 25 were at EAC 5 Sep (MW, JR, BHe), and 4 were in Sowbelly Canyon, Sioux Co, 6 Sep (MW, JR, BHe). Only 3 were reported from WHNC, those on 23 Aug (JL); this is likely related to moving the banding station this year away from the feeders at the Nature Center due to construction (HG). Away from the Pine Ridge, there were 7 reports scattered across the northern part of the state involving a total of 33 birds (m. ob), including one in a Dixon Co yard 17 Nov that was the "first there for 15 years" (JJ).

Common Redpoll: None were reported during the period of this erratic but generally annual winter visitor.

Pine Siskin: The reports outlined an interesting progression into and across the state during the period. All reports were from the Panhandle beginning 27 Aug, when one was at WHNC (HG); peak count was the 30 banded at CSP 5 Oct (JL). Away from the Panhandle, first reported were 2 at Stapleton 5 Oct (TJW), and the east was reached in mid-Oct, when 3 were in Dodge Co 10 Oct

(D&JP) and 3-5 were at SCP 12-14 Oct (DGe, E&GP). Numbers began to build in the east in late Nov, when 12-25 were in an Otoe Co yard 27-30 Nov (SQ).

Lesser Goldfinch: There were numerous reports, all but one from the banding station at WHNC. Two were found nearby in southeastern Banner Co 24 Aug (JGJ). At WHNC, 5 were banded 26 Aug-8 Oct (HG, JL), including a fem "still in breeding condition" 26 Aug (HG).

American Goldfinch: Best count was the 150 at Prairie Queen L, Sarpy Co, 22 Nov (MSh). High fall count is 265.

Evening Grosbeak: None were reported of this uncommon but erratic northwestern winter visitor.

House Sparrow: Best count was the 175 at Henry Doorly Zoo, Omaha, 6 Aug (BAi); such high counts occur, of course, where humans and a readily-available food source are present.

2015 Fall Migration Bird Banding at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area

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It was a different season of bird banding this year at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. Due to construction at the nature center, the banding station was moved farther down the road to one of the picnic shelters. The habitat remained mostly the same, with Ponderosa Pine and multispecies-shrub understory dominating the unique ridge landscape characteristic of Wildcat Hills. The new site provided more shrub understory, but lacked the running water of Turkey Creek and the bird feeders at the nature center. Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (formerly Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory) has been banding at Wildcat Hills for nine years now and this marks the first year the banding site was relocated.

This year we ended the season with a total of 364 birds of 34 species banded over a seven-week period. How does this stack up to previous years? On average, 509 birds are banded each year at Wildcat Hills, this year ranking the third lowest. However, annual captures have ranged widely, from a low of 227 birds in 2007 to a high of 915 birds in 2012. While the number of individuals banded this year was low the number of species banded was slightly above the average of 32

species annually. The number of species banded per year has ranged from 17 in 2007 to 41 in 2014. I reviewed the data and there is no apparent correlation between number of individuals and number of species banded. Possible influences on the seasonal variation might include weather and/or resource availability.

Moving the station this year provided an interesting opportunity to sample birds utilizing Wildcat Hills habitat away from the human presence surrounding the nature center. The change to a denser shrub and forest habitat proved more favorable to species such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, both of which were captured in record numbers this year. Numbers of Orange-crowned Warblers increased dramatically, from an average of seven birds per year to 46 this year. Only six Ruby-crowned Kinglets were captured from 2007 to 2014, but 14 were captured this year. A record 76 Spotted Towhees also were captured this year, though this is only three more than the previous record from last year when the station was in its original location. This year saw an increase in Dark-eyed Junco numbers and presence of the previously-unrecorded Pink-sided subspecies. In the birding community, Wildcat Hills has been known for its high numbers of Red Crossbills, averaging 75 captures per year; 2015 proved to be the first year since 2008 when no crossbills were captured.

In contrast, captures declined noticeably for Chipping Sparrows, one of the most commonly captured species in previous years. I caught only 22 this year in contrast to an annual average of 150 with a high of 383 in 2012. This species likely prefers pine edge and more open habitat surrounding the nature center. Finch species were also down this year, including American Goldfinch, Lesser Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, and House Finch, which are usually drawn to the feeders at the nature center. This combined group averages 150 banded each year, but this year I caught only 13. While capture rate was markedly lower for Lesser Goldfinches, they were still observed almost every day of banding and continue to remain established in the area.

Rare birds for the season included a Dusky Flycatcher that was banded in early September. This is the second one ever banded here, and a notable record for the state of Nebraska. An exciting new station bird this year was a young Blue Grosbeak. Several birds returned this banding season, including a Black-capped Chickadee from 2010, a Red-breasted Nuthatch from 2012, and a Chipping Sparrow from 2011. The first Northern Saw-whet Owl ever banded at Wildcat Hills was in 2014; she made two return appearances this year, and I was pleased to see she is still doing well. Recapturing individuals from previous years at the new location suggests that at least some birds are utilizing multiple areas within Wildcat Hills. Getting recaptures of migratory species such as Chipping Sparrow shows the route fidelity of these birds. Bird banding continues to be an important technique for monitoring bird populations. Migration, particularly, is a key time to ensure these populations are healthy.

Here is the complete list of species and individuals banded for 2015:

Sharp-shinned Hawk	1
Mourning Dove	4
Western Wood-Pewee	1
Least Flycatcher	1
Dusky Flycatcher	1
Cassin's Vireo	1
Warbling Vireo	1
Red-eyed Vireo	1
Black-capped Chickadee	19
Red-breasted Nuthatch	10
Pygmy Nuthatch	6
House Wren	8
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	21
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	14
Townsend's Solitaire	2
Swainson's Thrush	2
Hermit Thrush	6
Gray Catbird	1
Orange-crowned Warbler	46
<i>Audubon's</i> Yellow-rumped Warbler	3
<i>Myrtle</i> Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Wilson's Warbler	13
Yellow-breasted Chat	2
Spotted Towhee	76
Chipping Sparrow	22
Lark Sparrow	2
<i>Gambel's</i> White-crowned Sparrow	5
<i>Oregon</i> Dark-eyed Junco	17
<i>Pink-sided</i> Dark-eyed Junco	10
<i>Slate-colored</i> Dark-eyed Junco	5
<i>Unidentified</i> Dark-eyed Junco	46
Blue Grosbeak	1
Lazuli Bunting	1
House Finch	6
Pine Siskin	1
Lesser Goldfinch	5
American Goldfinch	1

South Sioux City Fall Field Days

by Janis Paseka

The 2015 NOU Fall Field Days took place in South Sioux City at the Americas Best Value Inn on Sept. 25-27. There were about 50 in attendance at the meeting which was organized by Dave Heidt, Robin Harding, Jan Johnson and Betty Grenon.

On Friday evening Ponca State Park Superintendent Jeff Fields told the group about the changes that have happened in Ponca State Park since its beginning in 1934 as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. It is the third oldest state park in Nebraska and now encompasses 2400 acres. It boasts one of the oldest bur oaks in the state, which has been dated to 1644. Ponca State Park is on an unchannelized 59-mile reach of the Missouri River which is now protected as a Scenic River, and the park has been designated an Important Bird Area. Changes happening to the park now include stabilization of the river banks and controlled burns to allow new bur oak growth as well as increasing efforts to make the park welcoming to the public and to encourage nature appreciation.

On Saturday evening, Mark Brogie, science instructor in the Creighton Public Schools, led a bird identification workshop using paired photos of birds which can be difficult to differentiate. This included Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Eared and Horned Grebes, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Warbling and Philadelphia Vireos. Mark and Ellen Brogie also brought dozens of bird skins from the Wayne State College collections (collected and prepared by Wayne Mollhoff) for the group to study.

Field trip destinations on Saturday and on Sunday morning included Ponca State Park, Basswood Ridge WMA, Kramper Lake (Danish Alps SRA), Big Bear Park, Winnebago Sewage Lagoons and numerous sites in Woodbury County, Iowa.

Field trips were led by Bill Flack, Bill Huser, Jan Johnson, Don Paseka, and T.J. Walker. Special thanks go to local members Bob Livermore, Jerry Probst and Rex Rundquist who led the trip to the Iowa destinations.

The total species count was 132. Some of the weekend highlights were Virginia Rail, American Golden-Plover, Black-billed Cuckoo, Peregrine Falcon, 6 swallow species, 11 warbler species and 9 sparrow species.

NOU Annual Meeting - South Sioux City

	Cedar	Dixon	Dakota	Thurston	Woodbury IA
Canada Goose	x	x	x	x	x
Wood Duck				x	x
Gadwall					x
American Wigeon					x
Mallard		x			x
Blue-winged Teal		x	x		x
Northern Shoveler		x			x
Northern Pintail		x			x
Northern Bobwhite			x		
Ring-necked Pheasant		x	x	x	
Wild Turkey		x	x	x	x
Pied-billed Grebe		x	x	x	x
Double-crested Cormorant		x	x		x
American White Pelican		x	x	x	x
Great Blue Heron	x	x	x	x	x
Great Egret					x
Cattle Egret			x		
Green Heron				x	
Turkey Vulture	x	x	x	x	
Osprey	x	x	x	x	
Bald Eagle		x	x	x	
Northern Harrier		x	x		x
Sharp-shinned Hawk		x	x	x	x
Cooper's Hawk		x	x	x	
Broad-winged Hawk		x	x	x	x
Swainson's Hawk		x		x	
Red-tailed Hawk	x	x	x	x	x
Virginia Rail					x
Sora					x

NOU Annual Meeting - South Sioux City

	Cedar	Dixon	Dakota	Thurston	Woodbury IA
American Coot			x		x
American Golden-Plover					x
Killdeer	x	x	x	x	x
Solitary Sandpiper		x			
Greater Yellowlegs		x			
Lesser Yellowlegs		x			
Least Sandpiper		x	x		x
Baird's Sandpiper		x			x
Pectoral Sandpiper		x			
Dowitcher species		x			
Wilson's Snipe			x		
Wilson's Phalarope		x			
Bonaparte's Gull	x				
Franklin's Gull	x	x	x	x	x
Ring-billed Gull	x	x			x
Common Tern	x				
Rock Pigeon	x	x	x	x	x
Eurasian Collared-Dove	x	x	x	x	x
Mourning Dove	x	x	x	x	x
Black-billed Cuckoo				x	
Eastern Screech-Owl				x	
Great Horned Owl				x	
Barred Owl		x	x		
Common Nighthawk			x		
Chimney Swift	x	x	x	x	x
Hummingbird species		x			
Belted Kingfisher	x	x	x	x	x
Red-headed Woodpecker		x	x		x
Red-bellied Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	x

NOU Annual Meeting - South Sioux City

	Cedar	Dixon	Dakota	Thurston	Woodbury IA
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			x	x	
Downy Woodpecker	x	x	x	x	x
Hairy Woodpecker		x	x	x	x
Northern Flicker	x	x	x	x	x
American Kestrel	x	x	x	x	x
Merlin			x	x	
Peregrine Falcon		x			x
Olive-sided Flycatcher				x	x
Eastern Wood-Pewee		x	x	x	
Least Flycatcher		x			
Eastern Phoebe			x	x	x
Blue-headed Vireo		x	x	x	
Warbling Vireo		x	x	x	x
Red-eyed Vireo		x		x	x
Blue Jay		x	x	x	x
American Crow	x	x	x	x	x
Purple Martin			x		
Tree Swallow			x	x	x
Northern Rough-winged Swallow			x		x
Bank Swallow		x		x	
Cliff Swallow				x	
Barn Swallow	x	x	x	x	x
Black-capped Chickadee		x	x	x	x
White-breasted Nuthatch		x	x	x	x
House Wren		x	x	x	
Sedge Wren		x	x	x	x
Marsh Wren		x	x	x	x
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		x	x	x	x
Eastern Bluebird		x	x	x	x

NOU Annual Meeting - South Sioux City

	Cedar	Dixon	Dakota	Thurston	Woodbury IA
American Robin	x	x	x	x	x
Gray Catbird		x	x	x	x
Brown Thrasher		x	x	x	x
European Starling	x	x	x	x	x
American Pipit			x		
Cedar Waxwing		x		x	x
Ovenbird				x	
Black-and-white Warbler		x	x	x	
Tennessee Warbler		x			
Orange-crowned Warbler		x	x	x	x
Nashville Warbler		x	x	x	x
Common Yellowthroat			x	x	x
American Redstart		x	x	x	
Magnolia Warbler		x	x		
Yellow Warbler		x		x	x
Palm Warbler					x
Yellow-rumped Warbler	x	x	x	x	x
Black-throated Green Warbler		x			
Canada Warbler		x			
Wilson's Warbler		x	x		
Spotted Towhee			x		
Eastern Towhee		x	x	x	
Chipping Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x
Clay-colored Sparrow		x	x	x	
Field Sparrow		x	x	x	
Vesper Sparrow			x	x	x
Savannah Sparrow		x	x		x
LeConte's Sparrow			x		
Song Sparrow		x	x	x	x

NOU Annual Meeting - South Sioux City

	Cedar	Dixon	Dakota	Thurston	Woodbury IA
Lincoln's Sparrow		x	x	x	x
White-throated Sparrow		x	x	x	
Scarlet Tanager			x		
Northern Cardinal		x	x	x	x
Rose-breasted Grosbeak		x	x	x	x
Blue Grosbeak					x
Indigo Bunting		x	x	x	
Dickcissel				x	
Red-winged Blackbird		x	x	x	x
Western Meadowlark			x		x
Brewer's Blackbird					x
Common Grackle		x	x	x	x
Brown-headed Cowbird			x		x
House Finch			x	x	
American Goldfinch	x	x	x	x	x
House Sparrow	x	x	x	x	x
County totals	31	97	94	86	84
Nebraska total:123					
Iowa total: 80					
Grand total: 132					

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The Nebraska Bird Review is published quarterly by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union, Inc., as its official journal, and is sent to members not in arrears of dues. Annual subscription rates (on a calendar-year basis only): \$25 in the United States and \$35 in all other countries, payable in advance. Single copies are \$7 each, postpaid, in the United States and \$9 elsewhere. Send orders for back issues to Anita Breckbill, NOU Librarian, c/o Music Library, WMB 30, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0101 (or at the email address listed below).

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1409 Childs Road East
Bellevue, NE 68005

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